



Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society

Established 1936

Affiliated to the RSGB
President: Harry Heap G5HF
Secretary: Martyn M3VAM

Club Call Sign: G0MWT
Chairman: John Bowen G8DET
Treasurer: Brian Thwaites G3CVI

Newsletter No 480

Web Address: www.g0mwt.org.uk

February 2006

This Month's Meeting - Tuesday, 7th February. 7-30pm at the MASC Portable Aerials by Tom Robinson, G0SBW

The availability of relatively light, compact, battery powered, multimode, HF/VHF/UHF rigs such as the Yaesu FT817, 857, 897, the Icom 703 and similar, has increased the popularity of /P working.

Tom suggests there is a lot of fun to be had by using these easily hand transportable rigs to operate "picnic table" portable using lightweight, easily erected antennas. His talk will therefore discuss factors affecting the choice of antennas to suit several operating situations (including SOTA), their construction and use. Several antennas will be available for examination and the talk will be illustrated with diagrams and photos comparing/showing antenna performance in various situations.

Dates for Your Diary

Sunday 5 February	Canvey Island Rally @10.30am - CARS will have 2 tables . . (See page 5)
Sunday 5 February	RSGB 432 MHz AFS Contest 0900 to 1300 UTC
Monday 6 February	RSGB Club Championship. SSB Contest 20:00 - 21:30
Sat/Sun 11/12 February	CQ WW WPX / RTTY 48hrs
Wednesday 15 February	RSGB Club Championship DATA Contest 20:00 - 21:30
Wednesday 15 February	CARS Committee Meeting. DVH 7-30pm. All Members welcome.
Thursday 23 February	RSGB Club Championship CW Contest 20.00 - 21.30

Who are your Executive & Committee Members?

In order for you to know who they are, here are their names & duties, though not necessarily in order of importance!

President: - Harry Heap, G5HF

Vice Presidents: Charles Shelton, G0GJS & Geoff Mills, G3EDM

Chairman:- John Bowen, G8DET.

Programme Secretary:- Martyn Medcalf, G1EFL

Assistant Secretary & Deputy Editor:-

Treasurer & Membership Secretary:-

Newsletter Postal Manager:-

CARS Awards, Clothing & Sales Manager:-

Contest Manager:- Steve Cocks, G4ZUL.

Publicity Manager:- Trevor Hawkins, M5AKA

Club RSGB Rep:- Chris Chapman, G0IPU

Vice-Chairman:- Chris Chapman, G0IPU

Committee Secretary:- Jim Smith, 2E0JPS

Colin Page, G0TRM

Brian Thwaites, G3CVI

Denis Lewis, M0FHA

Martyn Medcalf, M3VAM

Training Co-ordinator:- Clive Ward, G1EUC

CARS Webmaster:- John Bowen G8DET

ERG Rep:- Murray Niman, G6JYB

and... Tony Gilbey G4YTG, Ron Ingate M3CAM, Patrick Xavier M0XAP, Anthony Martin, M1FDE

QSL Manager:- CARS Member Carl Thomson, G3PEM.

You can email each person based on their callsign in front of @g0mwt.org.uk. E.g. John is g8det@g0mwt.org.uk

Our very grateful thanks to Denis and Joy for posting this Newsletter. Could it have gone by E-Mail? Do let us know. Have you heard of a Club Member who has not had a N/L this month? Maybe he/she has not paid their subs. Please keep our Membership Secretary, informed of any changes to your callsign or various addresses etc.

For further details contact our Programme Secretary: Martyn M3VAM on 01245-469008 or look on the CARS Web Site.

Club Nets: Tuesdays 8-30pm: (2nd) 145.375 : (3rd) 1.947 : (4th) 1.947 : (5th) 145.375. All +/- QRM.

January 2006 Meeting - RADIO CAROLINE Carl Thomson G3PEM

Around 100 members and visitors attended the meeting; probably our highest ever number. Carl started by giving credit and thanks to all those who had helped him in the presentation, with information, photographs and loan of equipment.

Carl told us how he moved from Marconi on £7 - £8 per week to £25 per week on Radio Caroline. Working on a boat proved rougher than Marconi - sometimes the Tender could not even come alongside.

MV Caroline was a larger ship than the Mi Amigo and was moved to be called "The North Ship" in Ramsey Bay, off the Isle of Man. The radio audience for this ship was enormous, covering Manchester and Liverpool and was typically 2million. Carl at a later time worked on both ships. Using photographs and drawings he took us through the accommodation and facilities of both ships. We were then given a run down of the studio and transmitter equipment, which was all new and up to the minute state of the art stuff at the time. Gates control panels and switches, Garrard studio record decks, spot tape players for adverts and jingles and the latest Continental Electronics type 316 transmitters. Continental Electronics, a well known American high power transmitter manufacturer designed their transmitters using a minimum of valve types so that the spares holding was kept to a minimum, a good feature for offshore or remote locations.

The maintenance routine was to do a complete clean up of the studio, switches, tape-heads and the air filters in the transmitters which were taken out and washed in the cook's sink in fresh water each night after shutdown. Once a week at night a full audio and full power line up was made culminating in playing mainly big band jazz at about 2am. This began to generate fan mail, mainly from the American forces in Germany with requests. On one occasion they apologised and said, "unfortunately we don't have that one"; three copies arrived from "they know not where" in the next post delivery.

They also received many signal reports from as far afield as the States and Australia (a 10kW transmitter, vertical aerial and as Carl put it, "the best ground plane in the world, seawater").

The aerial was a cage with circular forms tapering from the top held up by the mast which the designer specified must have stays at no less than 13 degrees. This meant that large spreaders had to be provided, the lower one high enough up for the supply tender (which went to Holland once a month for fuel, water and other supplies) to get alongside.

Carl then said the first inkling that we were in any trouble was when the TV aerial on the set we were watching had to keep being realigned. They also felt that the motion of the ship at anchor had changed. Some of the crew went on deck and although the anchor chain was tight (miles of chain being dragged) came to the conclusion they were inside the three-mile limit. A race ensued to shut down the transmitter and stow the crystals in a safe draw. Later in the evening they were told to put on their lifejackets and very soon they were on the beach with the heavy sea now breaking over them. The coastguards were firing rockets and eventually set up a Breeches Buoy. Carl helped all the DJs and operatives into the Buoy and on to the beach and then reported to the Captain that all the English crew were ashore and asked, as he had been a seaman, did he want him to stay? The Captain said "No you go". Carl made his way to the Buoy and realised that there was no one to help him in. He eventually managed with one leg in and one half in and doubled over, he lost his slippers but had the crystals and the theme record under his jacket. He walked up the beach and over the seawall with his toes and a few other parts of his anatomy blue with the cold (it had been snowing).

The Mi Amigo had gone ashore at Frinton where the normal space between the concrete groynes was not big enough to take a ship except at the one place near a concrete pillar - which was where they were! They were now Distressed Seamen and were driven to Walton Police Station where a Customs man appeared and said "any thing to declare". Carl said "yes" and handed over a part used wet packet of Peter Stuyvesant cigarettes. They were taken to a Walton outfitter and kitted out with plimsolls, jeans and a

check shirt each. He said the jeans were rubbish, but the shirt was marvellous and he only threw it away a year or so ago.

Carl volunteered to go with the ship whilst being towed to Holland and was signed on as supernumerary crew to comply with the landing laws. When the ship arrived in Holland the whole area was swarming with well-wishers and people wanting autographs as a result of the national press coverage. Carl's scrap book, which he had with him, contained many of these reports and pictures.

(Editor's Note... These may well be at the February Meeting).

The Mi Amigo was refitted with a new generator with a diesel of the sort used by the German U-boats during the war to power their new 50kW transmitter. The 50kW transmitter was in three cabinets and was chosen over the Marconi equivalent, as the cabinets would pass through a standard door opening. The studios were also re-equipped with Gates controls, turntables and a VU meter (volume units - audio level) for the DJs which they would keep well up into the red (max) level. However, there was another level control after this, only available to the Engineers to make sure the DJs were not too enthusiastic and overdrive the transmitter!

Carl had been on duty all day and was tired so he set the level just before a DJ change and turned in to get some sleep. The next DJ was Rosko, whose signature tune was Memphis, a noisy number with high audio peaks. There were cries of "Engineer, Engineer, the aerial is on fire". Carl rushed out to find every insulator arcing over to the rhythm of Memphis. He quickly shut down the transmitter, turned down the level and went back on the air. At a subsequent inspection of the stays it was found that some were only holding on with a single strand - they had someone looking over them that night or they would have lost the mast!

Carl put the story over so well that I thought it was as if he was 'yarning' across an armchair just to me. The entire talk got the full attention and accolade from the audience that it deserved.

Abridged write-up by Tony G4YTG. See the CARS Website 'Past Meetings' for the full version.

Chris Carroll, G3WWC - Silent Key.

CARS was sorry to hear that Chris Carroll G3WWC of Broomfield, Chelmsford died suddenly on Thursday 12th January 2006.

The funeral takes place on Thursday 26th January at Chelmsford Crematorium, 12.30pm.

A fuller obituary will be published in the March CARS Newsletter.

Who Has Never Lost a WD40 Spray Tube?

The little red tube that comes with WD40 cans (and other similar sprays) is guaranteed to get lost soon after arrival in the shack or workshop - and nothing else seems to fit the little hole!

I saw recently in a "What's New" column in a magazine that WD40 now has a captive application tube, but my solution to the problem is simpler.

When the YL disposes of any of a large range of household sprays that come in a bottle with a hand-operated squeeze-spray (e.g. window or surface cleaner, disinfectant etc), take off the clear plastic tube that is attached inside to the spray head (it just pulls off). Cut to a suitable length (a bit shorter than the red tube) and tape it vertically to the side of the WD40 can, sealing off the bottom with the tape.

The little red tube now drops neatly into this holder, and should never get lost again! But, never throw away the old tube when you eventually buy a new can of WD40 - it might come in useful for something else, if not as a spare.

Dave Penny, G3PEN

Power Consumption

I am aware that a number of Members have purchased the Maplin Mains Power Monitor (L61AQ) Analyser for £24.99, or similar. I am convinced that a number of porky pies are being quoted in the popular press regarding power consumption. One such recent quote being: -

"The standby power consumed by the TV set for night & day is the same as an evenings use - Switch it Off". I say, rubbish!

Carl, G3PEM did however set me thinking about power consumption. I have a conventional rotary disk Power Meter, which steams around for a few seconds when the Degaussing Coils are energised at the switch-on of the TV set and then settles down at maybe 150 Watts. The Video, Freeview box, DVD player & a Mini-disk seem to take virtually nothing when on standby - Am I correct?

What does your rig take?. I have a feeling that the small mains adapters consume power in the form of transformer copper & iron losses which is more than likely about the same as the rig takes on Receive!.

Switched Mode Power Supplies do not have mains transformers so cannot suffer from this problem - what do they take on standby?

Next month I hope to have the definitive power consumption readings - over to you to tell me.

John G8DET

Training Goes World-wide

Part of my role as the CARS Training Co-ordinator is to deal with requests from those who may want to join our Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced Courses and to process them. Although it may seem so, it's not as easy as it sounds especially when I'm out of the country.

I was lucky to be able to leave my old company BT at the age of 49, on early Voluntary Retirement. After carrying out a few Consultancies for BT in Malawi and Guyana, I really got the travel bug. So I made up my mind that from 2004 onwards, I was going start travelling, to places that I had always wanted to visit.

My dilemma was how to carry out my training role and at the same time travel. With a little help, or more accurately a lot of help, from my friends this was quite simply achieved.

Firstly Murray G6JYB set me up with remote access e-mail and placed all my important files on it, so that they could be remotely accessed easily and securely. I have to be led all the way when it comes to computing. Chris G0IPU said he would look after the remaining January 05 Foundation Course pro-forma returns and Trevor M5AKA agreed to check my post for course payments. Carl G3PEM and Ant M1FDE offered any support I needed. You have to work with the aforesaid to realise, what real team players they are.

As my daughter, Susie, was travelling with her boyfriend Robbie for a year and after being invited to join them for Christmas in New Zealand, I started my journey in late November. I arrived in Thailand and found five Internet cafes in the street I was staying. Internet Cafes were outnumbered by massage parlours and stands selling food. I avoided one of the aforesaid, can you guess which one? (I may talk of my fear of food poisoning in another article!) I went into my first Internet Café; the PC had English and Chinese lettering mixed, very confusing. After working out what to do I accessed my e-mails; I had 50 in total; 7 training, 6 from Murray, 4 from Trevor, 2 from John Bowen and one from my daughter. The rest were from other friends. All dealt with.

After a few days in Thailand I travelled on to Sydney and found an unbelievable number of Internet cafes in the main thoroughfare, George St. So more messages from Murray and Trevor and two more queries about the Foundation course, which were quickly answered. I then went into a pub for a pint of xxxx. The chap that served me had just moved from Chelmsford to get married, knew Danbury and said yours is the house with the aerals on it! Amazing!

Onto New Zealand to meet my daughter. Using the net wasn't so easy in Rangiora where I stayed, the only access was in the local public library where it was necessary to book or queue and it was poorly lit and expensive.

Moving onto Melbourne the only place I could find an Internet Café was in McDonalds. The keyboard was so bad I asked for my money back and had to wait until arriving in Singapore for my next access. During my time in Singapore I visited Malaysia, where I found one Internet Café, but the queue was over 50 yards long so I didn't bother and in Bahat Island, Indonesia, e-mail didn't seem to exist. My access to the Internet in Singapore wasn't that easy, I had to queue, but at least I could sit in an armchair in my Hotel/Hostel.

When I finally arrived back in England end of January 2005, to have broadband back and to be able to use my own PC was almost liberating, as well as a lot cheaper for handling CARS queries.

In June 2005 I got itchy feet again and travelled to Southern California where I stayed for seven weeks. Broadband was everywhere.

More recently I have spent time visiting my daughter in New York where I found it difficult to get on the net - an Internet Café in 37th Street meant queuing and the usage charge was ridiculous. My recent trip to Italy was even worse, no e-mail at all, I was though up in the mountains, so once again I had to wait until I arrived back home.

The above demonstrates with a lot of help from your friends, e-mail and good phone links, you can do anything (well almost) anywhere. Training going World-wide doesn't stop there, but that's another story that can only be told by one person, Murray.

Clive Ward G1EUC, CARS Training Co-ordinator
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CARS Training - Intermediate Course

The 5th Intermediate Course to be run by the Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society will start in March. The course will be held at the Danbury Village Hall near Chelmsford on Thursday evenings between 7 and 9pm from 2nd March until 4th May. The exam will be held on 11th May. Most places on the course have already been booked but there is room for a few more candidates. In order to join the course candidates must have first passed the Foundation exam. Those interested in attending should contact the CARS Training Manager Clive Ward G1EUC as soon as possible. Clive's Contact details are:

Tel: 01245-224577 Mob: 07860-418835

Email: training2006@g0mwt.org.uk

Web: <http://www.g0mwt.org.uk/training/>

The cut off date for bookings is 15th February.

Canvey Rally Sunday, 5th February.

Have you searched your loft yet, or was it the shed you promised to clear out or even the garage? Whichever it was, your unwanted bits and pieces; be they old radio, computer, photographic or non-household electrical items might just be what visitors to the Canvey Radio Rally have been hunting for. Geoff KLV and I will be very happy to

hear of any thing you think will raise a few pounds for Club Funds. Call either Geoff Lovegrove on Chm. 473822 or myself on Chm. 223835 and we may be able to arrange collection. On the other hand you may prefer to take it to the rally on the day. That day being Sunday February 5th. We have two tables to fill so we look forward to hearing from you. Rally opens for buyers at 10.30am.

Colin Page, G0TRM

February Contests by Steve G4ZUL

RSGB VHF Contests

05 February. 432 MHz AFS Contest

Starts: 09:00 UTC

Finish: 13:00 UTC

Sections: SF, O. (special rules S3).

For full details of all VHF contests, please refer to the RSGB VHFCC website

<http://www.blacksheep.org/vhfcc>

Or look for the VHF contesting calendar in the January issue of Radcom, p33.

RSGB Club Championship

This contest runs from February to July each year and is a series of short evening contests.

Dates are as follows:

SSB: 06 February 20:00 - 21:30 LOCAL

DATA: 15 February 20:00 - 21:30 LOCAL

CW: 23 February 20:00 - 21:30 LOCAL

Please try to support these short contests and send your log by email to HFCC using the excellent free SD contest logger by EI5DI, download from

<http://www.ei5di.com/>

CQ WW WPX / RTTY

Sat/Sun 11/12 February, 48hrs

Exchange: RST + serial number

Categories: Single op (single band & all band)
Multi operator (Single Tx, Multi two, Multi Tx)

Scoring: 3 points on 14, 21, 28MHz ; 6 points on 1.8, 3.5, 7MHz. If on a different continent and if same continent, then 1 point & 2 points respectively.

Prefix multipliers: The number of valid prefixes worked.

For full details please refer to CQ Magazine or <http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com/>

ARRL International DX / CW

Sat/Sun 18/19 February, 48hrs

Exchange: RST + transmitter power.

Categories: Low power, QRP.

Single op. = all band, single band, high power

Multi op. = single TX, two TX, multi TX..

Scoring: 3 points per QSO.

Multiplier: sum of states/provinces worked.
Final score: QSO points x multipliers.
Further information & rules from
<http://www.arrl.org/contests/>

CQ WW 160 Metre / SSB

25/26 February, 48HRS.
Exchange: RS + prefix or country abbreviation.
Categories: Single op, Multi op.
High power, low power, QRP.
Scoring: own country 2 points, other countries same

Continent 5 points.
Other Continents 10 points.
Maritime mobile 5 points.

Multiplier: sum of states/provinces/DXCC countries worked.
Final score: QSO points x the sum of all multipliers.
Further information from
<http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com/>

For any further information
please email Steve G4ZUL
contests2006@g0mwt.org.uk

Superdrug Radio

The store, Superdrug, sells (well, if you nag them enough) a smart little radio for £2.99.

Hans Summers, G0UPL, has updated his website with some info on how to convert these radio's to 1kHz steps. See:-

<http://www.hanssummers.com/radio/superdrg/>

Mods for a BFO are apparently on their way. They are an absolute bargain - it's worth that price just to be able to strip the components out to use for other projects e.g. a Frequency Counter.! They can also receive Top Band, with a slight fiddle.

Trevor, M5AKA.

CARS Member is a DF Champion

CARS is pleased to report that Andrew Mead, G4KQE is the new UK DF National Champion, having won the National Final a few weeks ago. He has done a write up which is his web site (with pictures) if you would like to have a look. There is a WebPage for the official results, which is:-

<http://www.geocities.com/andrewm2kk/nationalfinal05/>

Newsletter Editor for January 2006, Colin, G0TRM, promised you another Poem in the last Newsletter, here it is:-

"If....."

If you can keep a contact when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on QSB;
If you can send fast morse -and keep your wits
about you,
And search the bands for yet another new country;
If you can listen to static and not be tired of
listening,
And not let your equipment get damp nor gather
dust,
But keep it's dials shining and it's knobs glistening,
And yet keep your antennas standing proud and
free from rust

If you can dream of DX - and not make that dream
your master;
If you can think of high power - and not make that
thought your aim;
If you can meet with winning and disaster
And remember that contesting's just a game;
If you can bear to hear the words that you have
spoken
Distorted by a recording made off air,
And not worry about a radio that's broken,
But keep it in the loft to use for spares;

If you can fill the walls with all your QSL cards
And keep a log that's true and up to date,
And convince a youngster that the RAE's not that
hard;
And your license is paid on time and never late;
If you can force yourself to hear a quiet station,
Or stay awake until the lift has gone,
And be an ambassador for your nation,
And be careful not to waffle for too long;

If you reply to someone calling CQ,
For a chat or just to pass the time of day;
If you can talk to anyone who'll talk to you;
Or just listen to what they have to say;
If you can fill an unforgiving minute
By giving out a call to anyone,
The World is yours and every thing that's in it,
And - which is more - you'll be a HAM my son!

Darren GW7HOC MW5HOC of Wythall Radio Club
<http://www.wythallradioclub.co.uk/>

**Edited by John, G8DET with the Assistance of
Colin, G0TRM & Murray, G6JYB.**